

Ex 33-12 to 34-26 Torah Reading (Chol ha-Moed Sukkot)
English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman (Latest version September 27, 2020)

33:12 And spoke Moses to YHWH: “[I am aware] [that You] have been saying to me: ‘[Bring up] to the land [this people]’, but You have not told me whom You will send with me. You also have said, ‘I have known you by name, and you have found favor in my eyes.’
13 [And so now], [if pray], I have found favor [in your eyes], let me know—I pray—your ways, so I may truly [know You], in order that I find favor in your eyes, and see that it is your people—this nation here.”
14 [And God replied], “If My Presence went with you, would this make you rest easy?”
15 Said Moses to God, “Should *not* Your Presence [go with us], [do not bring us up] from here.”
16 [By what means] is it to be known therefore, [that I have found] favor in Your eyes, I myself [and Your people], if not [that You walk] among us? [That we are distinct]—I and Your people—[from every people] that is found on the face of the earth.
17 Then said Adonai to Moses,
“[Also it will be]: that the word, [this very word] that you have spoken, I will do,
[for you have found] favor [in my eyes], [and I know you] by name.”
18 [And Moses said], “Show me, I pray, Your Glory.”
19 [And God replied], “I myself [will cause to pass] all My Goodness [before your face]. [I will call out] [revealing the name] YHWH [before your face]. [I show favor] on whom I show favor, and I show mercy on whom I show mercy.
20 [And God then said], “You are not able to see my face, [because of the fact] that no one can see Me—no human—and live.”
21 [Further said] Adonai, “Here is a place [beside Me]. You may stand on this rock.
22 It will be, [when I pass by] in My Glory, I will place you in the cleft of the rock.
[I will then] [place my hand] [above you], [until I have passed by].
23 I will remove My hand, and you will see My back, [but my face] will not be seen.”

34:1 Then spoke Adonai to Moses, “[Carve for yourself] two tablets of stone [like the first ones]. [And I will write] on the tablets [those very words]—the words [that were inscribed] on the tablets—the first ones; the ones that you broke.

2 So you be ready by morning. Go up in the morning to Mount Sinai. [and present] [yourself to Me], there, on top of the mountain.

3 No man [is to go up] [with you], nor must any man be seen on all the mountain, Even sheep and cattle [may not graze] at the foot of the mountain before you.”

4 [And so Moses carved out] [another two] tablets of stone [like the first ones]. [Then got up] Moses in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, [just as it was] commanded by God to him, and he took [in his hand] the two tablets of stone.

5 [Then came down] YHWH [in a cloud], and stood with Moses there, and called out the name YHWH.

6 Then passed YHWH [before the face of Moses], proclaiming: “YHWH | YHWH, God merciful, and gracious, long-suffering in anger, full of kindness and truth.

7 maintaining love for the thousands, bearing iniquity, rebellion, and blunders. God cleanses, [but does not] [cleanse completely], visiting the sins of the parents on their children [and on their children’s] children, [to the third generation], [and to the fourth].

8 Then quickly [did Moses] bow to the ground, in prostration.

9 [And he spoke like this]: “[If, I pray], I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, may you walk now, my Lord, among us. [For a people] stiff-necked this is, [so do forgive] our sins and our errors; [make us your inheritance].”

10 [And God said], “Behold, [I myself] do cut a covenant: Before all your people [I will work] wonders, [the likes of which] have not appeared on the earth [within any nation]. [Then they will see]—[all of the people] whom you walk among, the work of YHWH, how awesome it is—that which I will do through you.

11 [Take heed—take care for yourself] [regarding what] I myself command you today. [For behold] [I drive out] [before you] the Amorite and the Canaanite, the Hittite and the Perizzite, the Hiyvite and the Yevusite.

12 Take heed [for yourself] [lest you cut] a covenant with the dwellers [upon the land]—the land which you are coming upon, lest they be a snare in your midst.

13 Rather their altars [you must tear down] [their standing pillars] [you must destroy], [their sacred trees] [you must cut down].

34:14 [For indeed], you must not bow down to an alien god. [As for] YHWH: “Zealous” is his name. A zealous god is He.
 15 Lest you cut a covenant with the dwellers of the land,
 [and whereupon] they stray [after their gods] and sacrifice to their gods, [and they call] [to you] to eat of their sacrifice.
 16 You will take of their daughters for your sons. Then will stray their daughters after their gods, [causing to stray [your sons] after their gods.
 17 And gods cast in metal, do not make for yourselves.
 18 The festival [of unleavened bread] you will observe. For seven days, [you must eat] matzahs as I have commanded you
 [at the appointed time], in the month of standing grain. Because it was in the month of Aviv, that you went out from Egypt.
 19 All that first issues from the womb is Mine, and all your livestock [that produces a male]: the first-born of an ox or a sheep.
 20 The first-born of a donkey you must redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, [you must break its neck].
 [Every single one] of the first-born of your sons [you must redeem]. No one may appear before Me empty-handed.
 21 For six days [you will work], and on day the seventh you will rest. From plowing and at reaping you must refrain.
 22 The festival of weeks must be kept [by you], first-fruits of the harvest of wheat.
 And the festival of gathering (Sukkot) at the turning of the year.
 23 Three times in the year must appear all your menfolk, [presenting themselves] to the Lord YHWH, God of Israel.
 24 [For I will drive out] nations before you, and I will widen your borders. There will covet no man your land,
 [when you go up] to appear in the presence of YHWH your God, three times in the year.
 25 Do not offer with leaven [the blood of My sacrifice]. Do not leave until morning the offering of the feast of Passover.
 26 [The best among] the first-fruits of your soil, [you are to bring] to the house of YHWH your God.
 Do not cook a kid in the milk of its mother.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)